(d) if so, what measures Government propose to take in this regard to save the country from ecological disaster?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) The Government are aware of the fact that prompt corrective measures are needed to maintain ecological balance in the country.

(b) According to official records, between 1951 to 1980, 4.328 million hectares of forest area have been lost for various purposes due to official diversion. The forest area actually lost is more. Since 1980, the official diversion of forest area to non-forest uses is approximately 5,500 hectares per annum. The main reason for the loss of forest area is biotic pressure.

(c) It is a fact that large quantity of fertile soil is washed away every year due to floods. There is no scientific evidence to conclude that the country, especially the Himalayas, are threatened to become deserts by the beginning of the 21st Century.

(d) The following steps have been taken to prevent an ecological disaster:—

(1) The emphasis in all forestry programmes today is laid on conservation and increased plantation efforts.

(2) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted with a view to minimise diversion of forest land for non-forest use.

(3) The State Governments have been advised to ban all fellings above 1000 meters in the in the hills and to restrict clear-felling of the natural forests.

(4) The National Wastelands Development Board has been set up to accelrate afforestation activities on wastelands and degraded Forest Lands.

(5) Peoples participation has been increased through Farm Forestry and decentralised nurseries.

Re-naming of Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Subhash and Swaraj Dwip

1662. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representations for renaming Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Subhash Dwip and Swaraj Dwip' and Port Blair as 'Port Subhash' or 'Subhash Bandor' as a mark of respect to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government thereto and whether any decision is likely to be taken in this regard before the next birthday of Netaji i.e. 23rd January, 1987?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Provision of adequate equipment in Doordarshan studios

1663. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in most of the Doordarshan Kendars particularly in Bombay, the studios are ill equipped and the staff inadequate; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to provide adequate equipments, such as cameras, for out-door work and production staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Augmentation and modernisation of technical facilities for production of TV programmes is a continuous process. Several schemes have been included in the VII Plan of Doordarshan for this purpose. As per requirements, staff is also sanctioned.

Low ratings of Hindi programmes of Doordarshan

1664. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that most of the Hindi programme telecast over Doordarshan have very low ratings in Eastern and the Southern India;

(b) whether Government propose to strengthen regional centres to provide more popular programmes over Doordarshan; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) It is not a fact that most of the Hindi programmes have a very low viewing in Eastern and Southern India.

(b) and (c) All full-fledged Doordarshan Kendras already put out programmes mainly in the respective languages of the region for a duration of about three hours daily. Production facilities are also being gradually increased at the Regional Kendras. They also undertake production of serials in the regional languages.

Construction of roads by Border Roads Organisation in Sikkim

1665. SHRI LEONARD SOLOMAN SARING: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Border Roads Organisation in Sikkim has not been able to do the work satisfactorily due to shortage of funds and manpower; and

(b) if so, what is the amount of budget allocations of NH31-A and all the roads under Border Roads Organisations including the North Sikkim Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI ARUN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Study into Environmental Pollution around Nepa Nagar Paper Industry

1666. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been undertaken to find out the level of environmental pollution in and around Nepa Nagar in Madhya Pradesh caused by the presence of Mercury which is used in the Paper Industry;

(b) if so, what are the findings of the study; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to undertake such a study?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) to (c) No specific study has been undertaken in this regard. However, investigations were made to ascertain the quantity of mercury in the effluent from the industry. According to the investigations, prior to installation of the treatment plant, the levels of mercury were above the prescribed standard. The effluent treatment plant has since been commissioned.